

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Currently, claims 54-63 and 65-70, including independent claims 54 and 67, are pending in the present application. Independent claim 54, for instance, is directed to an elastomeric glove that comprises a substrate body, a chemical protection layer that overlies an outside surface of the substrate body, a donning layer that overlies an inside surface of the substrate body, and an optional outer layer that overlies the chemical protection layer. The substrate body includes a layer made of at least one elastomeric block copolymer, such as a styrene-ethylene-butylene-styrene (S-EB-S) triblock copolymer. The chemical protection layer is formed from a polymeric material that consists essentially of at least one crosslinked, modified silicone elastomer that imparts relative chemical resistance to the elastomeric article. The chemical protection layer faces an external, environment-exposed surface of the elastomeric glove and the coating faces an internal, body-contacting surface of the elastomeric glove.

In the Office Action, independent claims 54 and 67 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,792,531 to Littleton, et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. EP 0609387 to Nash. More specifically, the Examiner concedes that Littleton, et al. fails to teach various aspects of independent claims 54 and 67, such as the claimed chemical protection layer. Nevertheless, Littleton, et al. was combined with Nash in an attempt to render obvious independent claims 54 and 67. Nash is directed to a surgical glove having a textured outer surface. The surface is obtained from a dispersion that contains hydrophilic silica and a silicone elastomer. The

hydrophilic silica has a particle size of about 2-10 microns, a specific surface area of about 75-200 m²/g, and a density so that the particles float in the elastomer and thereby migrate to the surface.

The Office Action stated that it would have been obvious to incorporate the silicone-based layer of Nash into the glove of Littleton, et al. Littleton, et al. describes a glove that contains a substrate body and a donning layer that facilitates donning of the glove by a user. Similarly, Nash also describes a textured donning layer that allows donning without the use of a lubricant. This is discussed in Nash as follows:

The present invention is directed to the task of improving the surface morphology of gloves, including silicone gloves, to provide a textured surface which has a lower coefficient of friction than a smooth surface and which is suitable for coating articles such as surgical gloves which presently require lubricants to enable donning. (p. 3, ll. 20-24) (Emphasis added).

Although Nash does mention that the "outer surface" of the glove is textured, this simply refers to the state of the glove prior to inversion. That is, as is well known in the art, the donning layer is formed by initially coating the "outer surface" of the glove and subsequently inverting the glove so that the donning layer is located on the "inner surface." The U.S. counterpart to Nash (U.S. Patent No. 5,620,773) explains this process in more detail as follows:

In glove manufacture, a hand-shaped mandril is repeatedly dipped into an elastomeric dispersion, cured and peeled off the mandril. Thus, the outer surface becomes the inside of the glove when the glove is removed from the mandril. That is, the glove is inverted during removal. Thus, if a textured mandril is used, the outer surface of the glove is textured when removed from the mandril. The dispersion described above provides a textured outer surface to the coating which surface becomes the inner surface when the glove is peeled

from the mandril. Such a textured inner surface is non-blocking and no lubricant is required to don the glove (Col. 3, ll. 19-30) (Emphasis added).

Thus, even if combined with Littleton, et al., the textured silicone layer of Nash would be employed as the donning layer, which overlies the *inside surface* of the substrate body and faces the *internal, body-contacting surface* of the glove so that it is able to improve donning. This is akin to the claimed donning layer, but in stark contrast with the claimed chemical protection layer, which overlies the *outer surface* of the substrate body and faces the *external, environment-exposed surface* of the glove. For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 54 and 67 patentably define over the cited references, taken singularly or in any proper combination.

In any event, Applicants respectfully submit that no motivation or suggestion would have existed to modify the references in the manner suggested in the Office Action. For instance, Littleton, et al. describes several known techniques for enhancing donning, but notes that such techniques are “not fully satisfactory for use with gloves made of the synthetic S-EB-S block copolymers and some other materials of construction.” (Col. 1, lines 55-59). One such technique involves the use of lubricating particles on the inner surface of the glove. Notably, the hydrophilic silica particles of Nash are similar in nature to the “lubricating particles” expressly taught away from by Littleton, et al.

Furthermore, the primary focus of Littleton, et al. relates to a donning layer for synthetic elastomeric block copolymer substrates, such as S-EB-S (styrene-ethylene-butylene-styrene) block copolymer substrates. (Col. 1, line 66 – Col. 2, line 13). The

donning layer of Littleton, et al. is thus specific for this substrate and contains a chlorinated mid block unsaturated styrene-isoprene (SIS) block copolymer. Littleton, et al. even specifies the preferred polystyrene end block content for the donning copolymers. (Col. 3, lines 40-67). In light of the above, there simply would have been no motivation for one of ordinary skill in the art to eliminate the donning layer expressly developed by Littleton, et al. for use with S-EB-S substrates in favor of the textured silicone layer of Nash. This is particularly evident in view of the fact that Nash does not even contemplate the same type of substrate required by Littleton, et al. Thus for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that no motivation would have existed to combine Littleton, et al. with Nash in the manner suggested in the Office Action.

Dependent claims 55-63, 65-66, and 68-70 were also rejected over a variety of references. Applicants respectfully submit that at least for the reasons indicated above relating to independent claims 54 and 67, the dependent claims also patentably define over the cited references. The patentability of the dependent claims, however, certainly does not hinge on the patentability of independent claims 54 and 67. In particular, some or all of dependent claims are believed to possess features that are independently patentable, regardless of the patentability of claims 54 and 67.

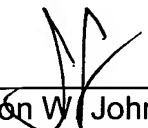
In summary, Applicants respectfully submit that the present claims patentably define over the prior art of record for at least the reasons set forth above. As such, it is believed that the present application is in complete condition for allowance and favorable action, therefore, is respectfully requested. Examiner Simone is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned, however, should any issues remain after

consideration of this Amendment.

Please charge any additional fees required by this Amendment to Deposit
Account No. 04-1403.

Respectfully requested,

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